

PERTINENT INFORMATION

In the eighteenth century, the Swedish father of botanical classification, Carl von Linne, gave hemp the genus and species name *Cannabis sativa* L.

The name CANNABIS is Latin for "hemp" or "canelike plant", and denotes the genus (kind) of the hemp family of plants. SATIVA, the species name, is Latin for "plant" or "sown," and denotes the nature of the plant's growth. Hence, *Cannabis sativa*, the marihuana plant, GROWS FROM SEEDS AND NOT FROM PERENNIAL ROOTS.

Cannabis is unique; it exists in a single species, although there are a number of varieties. The varieties differ from one another in quantity and in the potency of the resins they produce. These differences are mostly conditioned by the geographical location of the plant's growth. Thus *Cannabis sativa indica*, *Cannabis sativa americana*, and *Cannabis sativa mexicana* refer to the varieties of the single species *Cannabis sativa*, merely indicating the geographical regions where the plant is grown. *Cannabis sativa indica* is the form native to India, *americana* is American, and *mexicana* is from Mexico. It is interesting to note that if one takes the *Cannabis sativa indica* seed and transplants it in the United States, both *Cannabis sativa indica* and *Cannabis sativa americana* will spring from the plants. However, in a few short generations, because of climate and soil conditions, the *indica* variety will somewhat disappear, leaving only the *americana* to continue the reproduction cycle.

Cannabis sativa as a plant is more commonly referred to as hemp. Although the botanists place cannabis in the hemp genus, further classification is open to dispute. Some botanists insist that hemp belongs to the Mulberry family (MORACEAE); others feel it is so unique and distinctive that they have denoted a single family for both the hemp and hop plant called the Cannabinaceae. The hop plant is used to flavor beer and ale. I believe that the latter classification is more correct.

Cannabis sativa is a herbaceous annual, that is, a leafy plant with little or no woody parts that grows for a season, dies down, then springs up again the following year from its own seed. CANNABIS WILL NOT GROW FROM LAST SEASON'S ROOTS.

Cannabis is dioecious, that is, it has a male and female plant, both with flowering tops. Folklore and tradition account for the smoking of the flowering tops of the female plant rather than the male and today this distinction is a subject of great controversy. Most books and a majority of "heads" claim that only the female plant is useful for smoking, and that the male plant can be smoked as a harmless substitute for tobacco. Anyone who makes such a sweeping generalization is either completely misinformed or never has grown his own, or probably both.

The fallacy has its roots in the fact that in India, where the hemp plant has flourished for hundreds of years, the male plant is destroyed as soon as it begins to show its sex. A "ganja" doctor passes through the commercial fields, cutting down the male plant and snipping off the lower branches of the remaining female plants. In India it is believed that the ganja yielded by fertilized female plants is of a poorer quality and hardly saleable on the Indian market. One must keep in mind that this is in India where most of the *Cannabis sativa* is grown for ganja and hashish and not for just plain old marihuana. Contrary to what you might think, ganja and hashish are NOT marihuana.

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MARIHUANA usually refers to the flowering tops, resin, seeds, and leaves of both the male and female plant, wild or cultivated, which are dried and ground up.

GANJA is made from only the tops of the finest female plants. Only these leaves are separated, dried and ground up.

HASHISH is made from the finest tops of the finest plants. But the leaves are scraped while sticky, and the resin is extracted. This resinous oily sap is then transformed into hard blocks.

Marihuana, then, is just a certain type of preparation derived from the *Cannabis sativa* L. plant, the same plant from which hashish and ganja are derived.